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221034Z May 01

2001HANOI01245 - UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED PTQ5476

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	DOTE-00	DS-00
	EB-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	NSAE-00	OES-01	OIC-02	SS-00
	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	NFAT-00
	SAS-00	/007W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2944  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY  
ASEAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 HANOI 001245

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP, EAP/BCLTV, DRL, PRM, INR  
NSC FOR EAST ASIAN DIRECTORATE  
SECDEF FOR ISA/EAP STERN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [VM](#) [HUMANR](#) [CTERR](#)

SUBJECT: A/S KELLY'S BILATERAL MEETING WITH VIETNAMESE DEPUTY FM BIN: REGIONAL ISSUES, BTA, U.S. ACTIVITIST GROUPS  
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REF: HANOI 1217

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: ON MAY 17, FOLLOWING ARF SOM MEETINGS IN HANOI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY KELLY ENGAGED IN CORDIAL BUT FRANK DISCUSSIONS WITH FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DINH BIN ON A RANGE OF ISSUES, INCLUDING THE CONTINUITY OF U.S. POLICIES IN THE REGION AND U.S.-VIETNAM RELATIONS. BIN PRAISED THE REMARKABLE PROGRESS MADE IN A NUMBER OF AREAS OF 'AGREEMENT' BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY RATIFICATION OF THE BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, AREAS OF 'DISAGREEMENT' REMAIN, INCLUDING PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH GROUPS IN THE U.S. WHICH SUPPORT ANTI-GVN ACTIVITIES. ADDITIONALLY, HE RECITED THE OFT-HEARD REFRAIN THE U.S. HAS FAILED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE "CONSEQUENCES OF WAR", REFERRING PARTICULARLY TO THE ALLEGED CONTINUING WIDESPREAD EFFECTS OF AGENT ORANGE DIOXIN CONTAMINATION. HE SAID THE GVN LOOKS FORWARD TO LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE LATE JULY VISIT OF SECRETARY POWELL TO ATTEND SENIOR ASEAN/ARF MEETINGS IN

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HANOI, SO THAT THE MINISTRY CAN UNDERTAKE ARRANGEMENTS. THE FOLLOWING DAY, KELLY PAID A CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER NIEN. THAT MEETING WAS REPORTED REFTEL. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) ON MAY 17, FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING, ASSISTANT SECRETARY JIM KELLY, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR PETERSON, DAS BOYCE, DCM HARTER, EAP/RSP DIRECTOR STROTZ, ECONOMIC COUNSELOR DRY, POLITICAL OFFICER COLEMAN, AND EAP STAFF AID WOLFF, MET WITH FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DINH BIN, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS DIRECTOR DINH THI MINH HUYEN, DEPUTY  
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DIRECTOR AMERICAS DEPARTMENT DOAN XUAN HUNG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR POLICY PLANNING OFFICE TRAN DUC MAU, AMERICAS DESK OFFICERS NGUYEN THI BAO HUONG AND HA KIM NGOC, AND BIN STAFF AID TRAN QUANG TUYEN FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS. SINCE THIS WAS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY FOR BIN TO MEET WITH THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY, HIS PRESENTATION COVERED A NUMBER OF AREAS.

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13. (SBU) BIN OPENED NOTING BOTH THE U.S. AND VIETNAM HAD RECENTLY EXPERIENCED MAJOR POLITICAL CHANGE: IN THE U.S., THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAD ASSUMED OFFICE; IN VIETNAM, THE COUNTRY HAD CONCLUDED ITS NINTH PARTY CONGRESS. IN RESPONSE, KELLY ASSURED BIN THERE WOULD BE CONTINUITY IN APPROACH BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN THE REGION AND IN VIETNAM IN PARTICULAR. THE 'HOLDOVER' APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADOR PETERSON WAS EVIDENCE OF THAT IN VIETNAM. KELLY UNDERScoreD THROUGHOUT THE REGION, WHILE "THERE WILL LIKELY BE CHANGES IN TONE," THE APPROACH WITH EVERY IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP WILL REMAIN QUITE SIMILAR AS THAT OF FORMER ADMINISTRATION. HE SAID BOTH PRESIDENT BUSH AND SECRETARY POWELL HAD TOLD HIM TO SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE IN

CONSULTATIONS WITH ASIAN COUNTRIES. THE ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO GET TO KNOW THESE "FRIENDS" TO GET A BETTER SENSE OF THEIR PROBLEMS, INTERESTS AND PERSPECTIVES. KELLY SAID HE ATTENDED THE ARF SOM MEETINGS TO GET A BETTER SENSE OF THE POLICIES AND ISSUES TO BE IN A POSITION TO COUNSEL SECRETARY POWELL FOR HIS VISIT TO HANOI IN LATE JULY FOR ASEAN ARF/PMC MEETINGS.

14. (SBU) KELLY SAID ONLY DAYS EARLIER HE HAD ASSUMED HIS POSITION AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY, YET, HE'D VISITED JAPAN, KOREA, SINGAPORE, AND OTHER COUNTRIES EN ROUTE TO VIETNAM, UNCLASSIFIED

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AS WELL AS HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN TALKS IN CHINA. IN VIETNAM, HE HAD MET REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL SOUTH EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES. EVERYWHERE HE'S ENGAGED IN TWO WAY DISCUSSION AND EXPLAINED THE PRESIDENT'S THINKING BEHIND HIS MAY 1 SPEECH WITH REFERENCE TO NUCLEAR AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS.

15. (SBU) BIN SAID HE WAS PLEASED WITH KELLY'S INTEREST IN THE REGION AND IN VIETNAM. HE SAID THE NINTH PARTY CONGRESS'S CONCLUSION IN APRIL SHOWED NOT ONLY THAT VIETNAM REAFFIRMS THE DOMESTIC 'DOI MOI' OR 'RENOVATION' POLICIES, BUT ALSO THAT THE COUNTRY'S COMMITMENT TO OPENNESS TO THE OUTSIDE WILL CONTINUE. VIETNAM STANDS TO SERVE "AS A FRIENDLY AND RELIABLE PARTNER", HE SAID. "WE ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WHILE WE HAVE DIFFERENCES, WE ALSO HAVE COMMON INTERESTS." GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. WILL NOT ONLY SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES, BUT ALSO HELP PROMOTE REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY.

16. (SBU) ACCORDING TO BIN, AREAS WHERE THE U.S. AND VIETNAM HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS INCLUDE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION, COMMERCE, EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE, METEOROLOGY, LABOR, AND HUMANITARIAN WORK. THE BILATERAL S&T AGREEMENT CAME INTO EFFECT ON MARCH 26 AND THE TWO SIDES ARE ACTIVELY PURSUING IMPLEMENTATION. HE SPECIFICALLY PRAISED THE WORK OF THE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND MENTIONED THAT AGENCY'S SUPPORT FOR DESIGN AND UPGRADE OF THE DA NANG AIRPORT. BIN SPOKE HIGHLY OF U.S. -VIETNAM COOPERATIVE EFFORTS IN EDUCATION, TOO, HIGHLIGHTING THE FULBRIGHT AND INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS THE EDUCATIONAL TRUST ESTABLISHED LAST YEAR FUNDED BY VIETNAMESE DEBT PAYMENTS TO THE U.S. HE SAID THESE ACTIVITIES WILL DIRECTLY SUPPORT HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM. HE NOTED THE RECENT VISITS TO VIETNAM OF CODEL CRANE AND STAFFDEL ATKINS.

17. BUT, HE CONTINUED, "SPEAKING FRANKLY PROBLEMS HAVE DEVELOPED AFFECTING THE RELATIONSHIP." THE TWO SIDES NEED TO FIND WAYS TO CONTINUE MOMENTUM IN THE RELATIONSHIP. POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE NEEDS "TO CONTINUE AND INTENSIFY." HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF NOVEMBER'S VISIT TO VIETNAM OF PRESIDENT CLINTON. HE HOPED IN YEARS AHEAD FOR OTHER HIGH-LEVEL VISITS. SIMILARLY, FREQUENT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WOULD HELP ADDRESS "EMERGING ISSUES." IN THAT REGARD, BIN WELCOMED THE UPCOMING VISIT OF RICHARD HAAS OF THE POLICY PLANNING OFFICE TO PARTICIPATE IN POLICY TALKS WITH THE GVN. ALSO, BIN SAID THE VIETNAMESE SIDE WAS PLEASED WITH THE PROSPECT OF SECRETARY POWELL'S LATE JULY VISIT. NOT ONLY WILL THE VISIT ADVANCE THE ASEAN DIALOGUE, BUT IT ALSO WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTRIES TO COOPERATE. HE SOUGHT "PROPOSED UNCLASSIFIED

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PLANS AND PROGRAMS" FOR THE SECRETARY TO BEGIN UNDERTAKING ARRANGEMENTS.

18. BIN NOTED THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF TRADE AND ECONOMICS IN THE RELATIONSHIP. IT HAD TAKEN FOUR YEARS TO CONCLUDE THE BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT (BTA). THE BTA LAYS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE RELATIONSHIP TO MOVE AHEAD. ITS IMPLEMENTATION WILL MUTUALLY BENEFIT BOTH SIDES. "WE SHOULD NOT ATTACH DIFFICULTIES OR CONDITIONS TO THE RATIFICATION PROCESS." HE ASKED REGARDING THE TIMING OF THE SUBMISSION OF THE BTA TO CONGRESS. HE SAID VIETNAM IS PREPARING FOR RATIFICATION BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AS WELL AS FOR IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOWING RATIFICATION. THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT HAS BRIEFED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATES ON THE BTA. "IF THERE ARE DELAYS IN RATIFICATION," HE SAID, "IT WILL CALL INTO QUESTION THE INTENTION OF THE U.S. SIDE." BIN NOTED THE U.S. HAS ENJOYED MFN TREATMENT FROM VIETNAM UNILATERALLY FOR IMPORTS. HE SAID DELAYS IN RATIFICATION BY THE CONGRESS COULD RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONTINUATION OF THIS POLICY.

19. (SBU) ON HUMANITARIAN RELATIONS, BIN SPOKE HIGHLY OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON MIA/POW FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING, AND NOTED SADLY THE TRAGIC ACCIDENT IN APRIL WHEN A VIETNAMESE HELICOPTER CONTRACTED BY THE JOINT TASK FORCE CRASHED KILLING A TOTAL OF SIXTEEN AMERICANS AND VIETNAMESE. HE ALSO PRAISED U.S. DISASTER RELIEF AND MITIGATION ASSISTANCE SAYING THE U.S. PROVIDES NEEDED SUPPORT WHENEVER DISASTER STRIKES. HOWEVER, HE CONTINUED, REGARDING THE "CONSEQUENCES OF WAR", THE U.S. SHOULD BEAR "MORAL AND MATERIAL RESPONSIBILITY." THE GVN PROVIDES A UNCLASSIFIED

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MONTHLY ALLOWANCE FOR VICTIMS OF 'AGENT ORANGE', BUT IT IS  
NOT ENOUGH. A NUMBER OF NGOS, BIN SAID, HAVE BEGUN  
PROVIDING ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, THE LEVEL "FALLS SHORT".  
WHILE HE SAID IT IS NECESSARY TO PURSUE RESEARCH, BECAUSE  
THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR ARE SO SERIOUS, THE GOVERNMENT FEELS  
IT CANNOT WAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE RESEARCH. HE URGED THE  
U.S. TO MAKE A "PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION" TO VICTIMS NOW.  
FINALLY, HE SAID TWO YEARS AGO THE VIETNAMESE RED CROSS WAS  
DESIGNATED AS THE ENTITY TO RECEIVE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR A.O.  
VICTIMS.

110. (SBU) BIN ALSO REITERATED THAT THE U.S. IS NOT LIVING  
UP TO THE COMMITMENTS THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESPERSON MADE IN  
A DECEMBER 19, 2000 STATEMENT WHICH DEPLORED PRIVATE  
AMERICAN CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN ANTI-FOREIGN GOVERNMENT  
ACTIVITY. HE SAID THAT A NUMBER OF PEOPLE OF VIETNAMESE  
ORIGIN IN THE UNITED STATES CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES  
HARMFUL TO VIETNAMESE STABILITY. HE ALSO TOOK EXCEPTION TO  
RECENT STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUED HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON  
VIETNAM, AS WELL AS THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE COMMISSION ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WHICH "FAILED TO REFLECT THE  
TRUE SITUATION IN OUR COUNTRY." BIN ALSO CRITICIZED THE  
DECISION OF THE U.S. TO ACCEPT FOR SETTLEMENT IN THE U.S.  
VIETNAMESE CITIZENS WHO "ILLEGALLY MIGRATED" TO CAMBODIA  
(FOLLOWING THE EARLY FEBRUARY DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE CENTRAL  
HIGHLANDS).

111. (SBU) KELLY RESPONDED BY APPRECIATING THE MANY AREAS OF  
DEEP COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE TOO  
REGRETTED THE TRAGIC HELICOPTER ACCIDENT IN APRIL. HE  
COMMENTED THE BEST MEASURE TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP IS  
HONEST DISCUSSION NOT ONLY IN AREAS OF AGREEMENT, BUT ALSO  
IN AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT. HE SAID THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM  
REPRESENTED A CASE WHERE THERE WAS A SURPRISING AMOUNT OF  
COOPERATION AND CONSENSUS AMONG DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. THE  
VISIT OF S/P DIRECTOR RICHARD HAAS WILL PERMIT THE TWO SIDES  
TO CONTINUE THE POLICY DIALOGUE. THE SECRETARY SHOULD ALSO  
HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS.  
HOWEVER, KELLY SAID IT WAS NOT YET CLEAR HOW MUCH TIME HE  
WOULD HAVE TO SPEND IN VIETNAM, GIVEN THE PRESS OF OTHER  
URGENT INTERNATIONAL ISSUES.

112. (SBU) REGARDING THE BTA, KELLY SAID THERE WAS A BROAD  
CONSENSUS IN WASHINGTON IN FAVOR OF THE AGREEMENT THE BTA  
ITSELF DOES NOT NEED RENEGOTIATION, BUT OTHER DOMESTIC TRADE  
ISSUES STILL NEED TO BE SORTED OUT. "EVERY COUNTRY HAS  
INTERNAL DEBATES OVER RESOLVING TRADE ISSUES." WORK IN THAT  
REGARD SHOULD BE COMPLETED QUICKLY, KELLY SAID.

113. (SBU) KELLY EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THE PROMINENCE OF THE  
AGENT ORANGE ISSUE IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. HE SAID  
HE WOULD EXPLORE THE ISSUE MORE. YET AT THE SAME TIME, HE  
NOTED THAT ILLNESSES ARE VERY MUCH A PART OF EVERY HUMAN'S  
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LIFE (IMPLYING VIETNAM CANNOT ATTRIBUTE THE LION'S SHARE OF  
ILLNESS IN THE COUNTRY TO THE EFFECTS OF RESIDUAL DIOXIN  
FROM AGENT ORANGE SPRAYING FROM THE WAR PERIOD). KELLY  
ADDED THAT THE U.S. POLICY ON AGENT ORANGE REMAINS THAT WE  
BACK FURTHER RESEARCH AND WE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO MOVE  
AHEAD ON THE PROPOSALS WE HAVE MADE.

114. (SBU) KELLY SAID U.S. ASSISTANCE TO MONTAGNARDS WHO  
FLED TO CAMBODIA FROM THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WAS FULLY  
CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND U.S. POLICY.  
FURTHERMORE, HE URGED THE GVN TO PERMIT CONSISTENT AND  
REGULAR ACCESS TO THE AREA BY EMBASSY OFFICERS. THIS WOULD  
BRING THE SITUATION THERE TO LIGHT, PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY  
AND UNDERSTANDING. BIN REPLIED LATER IN THE MONTH DIPLOMATS  
(AS A GROUP) HAVE BEEN INVITED TO TRAVEL TO THE CENTRAL  
HIGHLANDS. ON THE MATTER OF THE DEPARTMENT'S DECEMBER 19  
STATEMENT, KELLY AND AMBASSADOR PETERSON REAFFIRMED THAT IT  
WAS OUR POLICY TO ATTEMPT TO PREVENT AMERICANS FROM  
INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES ABROAD. THAT  
THIS WAS A GENERAL U.S. POLICY AND THE STATEMENT WAS MEANT  
NOT ONLY TO PROVIDE ASSURANCES TO VIETNAM, BUT ALSO CAMBODIA  
AND LAOS. WHILE NOTING CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS  
PERMITTING FREE SPEECH, THE KELLY AND THE AMBASSADOR  
INDICATED THERE ARE CASES WHEN THE U.S. WILL ACT AGAINST  
ANTI-FOREIGN REGIME ACTIVITY. IN THAT REGARD, KELLY NOTED  
SOME U.S. CITIZENS INVOLVED IN EUROPEAN TERRORISM WERE PUT  
ON THE TERRORIST LIST.

115. (SBU) AS KELLY EXPRESSED THE USG'S DESIRE TO BEGIN  
PROCESSING OF FORMER U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (U-11 CASES)  
REMAINING UNDER THE ORDERLY DEPARTURE PROGRAM. HE NOTED  
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VIETNAM'S AGREEMENT IN 1999 TO ALLOW US TO DO SO LATER THAT  
YEAR. WHEN VICE MINISTER BIN RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT WHY THE  
U.S. DELAYED THE PROCESSING UNTIL NOW, AMBASSADOR PETERSON  
PROVIDED BACKGROUND ON THE SUBJECT AND URGED HANOI TO PERMIT  
THE EARLIER AGREEMENT TO STAND. BIN SAID HE APPRECIATED THE  
AMBASSADOR'S EXPLANATION AND WOULD MAKE SURE OTHER CONCERNED  
OFFICIALS UNDERSTOOD THE U.S. EXPLANATION.

COMMENT  
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116. (SBU) THERE WAS LITTLE OF SURPRISE IN DEPUTY MINISTER BIN'S BRIEFING TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY KELLY ON THE STATE OF U.S.-VIETNAM RELATIONS; THESE SAME ISSUES COME UP TIME AND AGAIN BETWEEN MFA OFFICIALS AND EMBASSY OFFICERS. WE CONTINUE TO SEE EYE-TO-EYE ON SOME THINGS: E.G., TRADE, S&T COOPERATION, DISASTER MITIGATION, DEMINING, A LABOR DIALOGUE, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION COOPERATION. WHILE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT (E.G., AGENT ORANGE) REMAIN INTRACTABLE, WE CAN DISCUSS THE ISSUES AND SHARE PROPOSALS WHICH HOPEFULLY ONE DAY WILL MOVE THE AGENDA FORWARD. WE CONCUR IN BIN'S SUGGESTION THAT BOTH SIDES INCREASE CONTACTS AND DIALOGUE AS A MEANS OF FURTHER ADVANCING THE RELATIONSHIP. NB: THE KELLY/BIN MEETING TOOK PLACE PRIOR TO EMBASSY LEARNING THAT THE GVN HAD ARRESTED HUE-BASED DISSIDENT PRIEST FATHER NGUYEN VAN LY. KELLY MET THE FOLLOWING DAY IN A LESS FORMAL AND BRIEFER MEETING FORMAT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER NIEN AND DISCUSSED THAT INCIDENT. SEE REFTTEL. END COMMENT.

117. (U) ASSISTANT SECRETARY KELLY DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THIS MESSAGE PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM HANOI.

PETERSON

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